



UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

April 26, 2017

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to transmit the 2017 Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). This report covers January 2016 through February 2017 and was prepared in compliance with section 202(a)(2) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (IRFA), as amended.

The 2017 Annual Report documents religious freedom conditions in more than 35 countries and makes many policy recommendations, including:

- The Secretary of State should:
  - Continue to designate 10 countries as “countries of particular concern,” or CPCs, under IRFA for egregious religious freedom violations: Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan;
  - Designate six additional countries as CPCs: Central African Republic, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Syria, and Vietnam; and
  - Designate as “entities of particular concern” for religious freedom violations under IRFA, as amended by the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 114-281): the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the Taliban in Afghanistan, and al-Shabaab in Somalia.
- The U.S. government should closely monitor religious freedom violations in 12 countries placed on USCIRF’s Tier 2: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, and Turkey.

Additionally, the 2017 Annual Report highlights concerns in Bangladesh, Belarus, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Nepal, Somalia, and Western Europe.

USCIRF believes that the adoption of the recommendations outlined in the Annual Report would advance U.S. efforts to protect and promote the universal right to freedom of religion or belief worldwide.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our work and these policy recommendations.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Reese, S.J.  
Chair

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732 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NW SUITE A714 | WASHINGTON, DC 20401 | (202) 523-3240 | (202) 523-5020 (FAX)

Thomas J. Reese, Chair • Daniel Mark, Vice Chairman • James J. Zogby, Vice Chair  
Kristina Arriaga de Bucholz • Tenzin Dorjee • Sandra Jolley • Clifford D. May • John Ruskay • Jackie Wolcott  
Erin D. Singhsinsuk, Executive Director  
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April 26, 2017

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

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April 26, 2017

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
President Pro Tempore of the Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hatch:

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The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson  
Secretary of State  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

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